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Problems of Common Interest: The Shaping of Education in Pakistan, 1970-2014

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Abstract

This paper examines the policy initiatives, taken since the 1970s, that have shaped the development of education in Pakistan, and other primary issues related to it. The paper reviews governmental policy documents alongside an analysis of the available relevant data on corresponding issues. This examination illuminates competing interests and factors that have made the goal of quality universal public education in Pakistan elusive. Specifically, this study reveals that the quest for universal education has been stymied by interconnected, often self-perpetuating factors, such as:- unprecedented population growth alongside increasing gender disparities, inadequate funding coupled with systemic corruption, diminished democratic aims in education and the increasing influence of religious zealotry. The paper concludes by suggesting that education in Pakistan must become a matter of common interest.

Key Words: education policy, Pakistan, gender equality, education funding, religion and education, Education Despatch of 1854.

1. Introduction

The end of colonial rule in India spawned massive population migrations, and partitioned the formerly British India into two separate countries with different. Disparities in educational opportunity under British colonial rule have had a lasting impact on both India and Pakistan—but educational opportunities for the Pakistani population remains elusive. Following independence in 1947, the foundation of educational planning in both India and Pakistan was based on nation-building efforts. As India consolidated its economic resources and increased educational opportunities for its populace, the smaller-sized Pakistan with multiple problems did not achieve similar economic growth (Husain, 2009). Consequently, it remains mired in poverty with high illiteracy. Pakistan has an estimated literacy rate of between 48% and 54 %. Over 32% of the population that lives below the poverty line cannot afford quality education, which is the privilege of the elite and the economically privileged. (Nazir, 2010).

From its inception, schooling in Pakistan has served a small segment of the highest social class. Pakistan has small landed elite that controls capital and production—with a selfish motive to maintain their position of power over a large, uneducated populace. The elite utilize formal education to maintain social advantage, while denying opportunity to the laboring class ensuring a low-cost labor supply. These existing class disparities in education were exacerbated when Pakistan became an independent nation in 1947

(Peshkin, 1962). These disparities have remained, and attempts to decrease them have proved futile.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is the sixth largest nation in the world with an estimated population of around 170 million. Punjab province has the largest population—comprising roughly 55% of the entire national population (Nazir, 2010). Pakistan's population has changed dramatically in the last 50 years. For example, in 1951, the population was 34 million. In 2005, that number had risen to an astounding 254 million—with a demographic shift in population toward a higher prevalence of youth (Khalid & Khan). The dramatic rise in the number of school-age children has created a strain on economic institutions, resulting in reduced spending on education.

1.1 Research Question & Methodology

In March of 1963, Alan Peshkin published a paper on the shaping of education in Pakistan (Peshkin, 1963). Peshkin examined the lasting influence of British colonization on the education system of Pakistan, and the broader educational aspirations of the Pakistani people within the context of their society. He detailed education reform plans developed in the pro-independence era of India from 1920-1948, and the circumstances stemming from the partition of the Indo/Pakistan subcontinent—along with political and economic factors influencing educational reforms in Pakistan (Peshkin, 1963). His examination revealed recurring themes and the inability to achieve universal compulsory primary education. Building upon the work of Peshkin, this research examines some of the contemporary contours of the Pakistani educational system.

The aim of this paper is to examine the policy initiatives, taken since the 1970s, that have shaped the development of education in Pakistan, as well as other related primary issues. The primary research question that shaped this paper was what are the competing interests and factors that have made the goal of quality universal public education in Pakistan elusive? A subsequent question is what issues have consumed the attention of policy makers. The primary objectives are a more adequate understanding of policy initiatives from the 1970s the contemporary time period, and a more comprehensive understanding of the competing interests that have impacted policy initiatives

To answer this question, this work utilizes intellectual history tracing the recent development of education in Pakistan. This utilizes qualitative archival research focusing on a vast range of primary and secondary source material. For example, the research presented here draws from policy documents from the Ministry of Education in Pakistan, as well as statistics, data, and other research collected by UNESCO and the World Bank. This work draws on educational statistics from the Ministry of Education and international aid agencies to examine enrollment figures, gender disparities, literacy rates, and the impact of religion in education.

2. History & Background

The early history of the Indian subcontinent shaped education in Pakistan. In 1765, when the East India Company was granted civil powers over the geographic region, education was used solely as a means to control the populace (Khalid & Khan, 2006). Education became a strategy by colonizers throughout Asia to keep the populace subservient to a longstanding system of exploitation (Khalid & Khan, 2006).

In the pre-independence period, the Indian Territory (including what is now Pakistan) began to discuss the formation of an education system. The design of education is attributed to the *Education Despatch of 1854*, which stated that schools should be "practically useful to the people of India in their different spheres of life." Likewise, it should "provide more opportunities than now exist for the acquisition of such an improved education as will make those who possess it more useful members of society in every condition of life" (Peshkin, 1963). British colonialism had utilized a self-serving education system that did not provide opportunities for social advancement.

The 1947 partition of British India that created two countries fostered major challenges to education in the region. The education system was dramatically affected when formerly British India split into the Muslim state of Pakistan and a predominantly Hindu India. The mass exodus of Hindus from the geographic region occupied by Pakistan left a major void in the fields of economics, commerce, and education. Hindus were predominant in the teaching profession and their departure (particularly in East Pakistan) left the educational system decimated. Hindus had also been more accepting of Western education. Many schools and colleges shut down as Hindus fled the region (Khalid & Khan, 2006). Following independence, an *All Pakistani Education Conference* was held. An affirmation of the need for universal primary education was a major outcome of the conference. This goal has remained elusive.

In 1948, the *Central Advisory Board of Education* was established. Originally, the *Board* formed in 1920 in an undivided India. After education was made a provincial domain—and reconstituted in the same form in Pakistan—the objective of the *Board* was "To provide a forum for the discussion of problems of common interest" (Peshkin, 1963).

Since the 1948 *Board* there have been seven national education policies, eight 'five-year plans', and a number of national programs. However, few policies and planning documents (*e.g.*, the 1951 education policy) devoted attention to curriculum planning, and teacher recruitment. Even the most detailed programs, planning documents, and policies have not produced results (Bengali, 1999). The following section examines the focus of education policy and factors since the 1970s that have made universal public education elusive.

2.1 Education Policy in Pakistan 1970-2012

Although nation-building has remained an ongoing theme since 1947, national policy debates have displayed an increasing awareness of religion, poverty, gender disparities, and other factors related to education. Since the 1970s, the governmental education policy has upheld the significance of education only in theory (Bengali, 1999).

Education policy rhetoric from 1972 to 1980 centered primarily on eradicating illiteracy through universal elementary education along with adult education programs (Pakistan, 1972). These policy documents continually reiterate the need for free universal education. The 1970s national education policy, for example, reaffirmed the government's commitment "to the objective of universal elementary education" (Pakistan, 1970). In the 1970s, some of the main causes for failure to achieve a system of free and universal schooling were: lack of planning, financial limitations, decreasing exports, low GNP, and

substantial population expansion (Parveen, 2011). Implementation of 1970s educational policies was also interrupted due to the war with India, the secession of East Pakistan, and the collapse of the military government (Bengali, 1999). Civil war in East Pakistan culminated in the transformation of the region into the independent country of Bangladesh.

In 1972, the government of Pakistan nationalized the nation's private education institutions, restating a commitment to universal free education (Parveen, 2011). While the government's policy initiative included increasing enrollment, provision of free textbooks, revising curricula, developing teacher training courses, and replacing an annual examination system, these changes were not instituted. Although teacher training improved, the 1970s were characterized by lack of adequate planning. Re-affirming the Karachi Plan of the 1960s, the education policy of the 1980s promoted compulsory, universal free primary education as a national target. A five-year plan had aimed for universal enrollment by 1986-1987 (Pakistan, 1970). In addition to enrollment, literacy was a major focus of education policy.

2.2 Literacy

In 1972, the overall literacy rate was 21.7% (Bengali, 1999). The table below presents a comparison of urban and rural literacy rates, according to the government's population census of 1972 and 1981. One can see only modest gains between 1972 and 1981 (Bengali, 1999).

Table 1: 1972 Literacy Rates of Population in Pakistan

	Total (%)	**Urban (%)**	**Rural (%)**
1972 Male Only	30.2	49.9	22.6
1972 Female Only	11.6	30.9	4.7
1981 Male Only	35.0	55.3	26.2
1981 Female Only	16.0	37.3	7.3

In 1981, the Literacy and Mass Education Commission was established by the federal government with the primary goal of achieving mass literacy. The resulting policy stated, "Islam assigns great importance to the acquisition of knowledge and makes its pursuit incumbent upon every Muslim" (Bengali, 1999). The sixth plan in the 1980s contained a national literacy plan for 1984-1986. The aim of this plan was to raise literacy rates from 26.2 to 33%; and proposed opening over 25,000 literacy centers. In 1983, a national workshop on female literacy was also developed. These plans linked education to social and economic development. An assessment of the plans stated:

Thirty-five years after independence, Pakistan has a literacy rate below 25 percent and less than half of primary school going age children are in schools. These indices place Pakistan amongst the least developed nations... At the scale at which it persists, illiteracy is a blot on our social image and the chief impediment to our long-term economic and technological advance (Development of Education, 1989).

In 1981, Pakistan adopted the definition for literacy (readopted in 1998) which classifies the literate person as one who can read a newspaper and write a simple letter (Samady,

2007). Even with the bar set this low, literacy rates remain low. In the 1990s, Pakistan had one of the lowest literacy rates in the world at 34% (Huebler & Lu, 2012). This rate had not made any substantial improvement from the 1980 census data that recorded 26.2% of the public as illiterate (Bengali, 1999). In 1998, Pakistan ranked 142 out of 160 countries in terms of literacy—demonstrating a high rate of illiteracy (Bengali, 1999). In 2004, the literacy rate in Pakistan was 61.7% (for males) and 35.2% (for females) (Latif, 2009). By the government's own estimate, Pakistan in 2008 had a population of over 167,762,040 individuals with a literacy rate of only 49.9% (Pakistan, 1998). Today, Pakistan is projected to have the second highest number of illiterate adults at 51 million in 2015 (Huebler & Lu, 2012).

2.3 Enrollment Rates, Ratios, and Education Funding

Enrollment ratios have varied between provinces. For example, the enrollment ratio in the 1980s was around 32% in Balochistan, 59% in Sindh, 52% in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP, now often referred to as 'Khyber Pakhtunkhwa'), and 48% in Punjab. The enrollment rates of girls in these provinces also varied with 10% in Baluchistan, 14% in NWFP, 16% in Sindh, and 29% in Punjab (Lloyd, Mete, & Grant, 2007). Table 2 presents enrollment ratios in the 1980s in the four main provinces (Lloyd et al., 2007).

Table 2: Primary School Enrollment Rates in the Four Main Provinces of Pakistan

Province	**Total (%)**	**Girls Only (%)**
Balochistan	32	10
Sindh	59	29
NWFP	52	14
Punjab	48	29

It is clear that gender-based enrollment rate disparities remained between rural and urban youth as presented below in Table 3 (Lloyd et al., 2007).

Table 3: Rural and Urban Gender Gap by Province for Primary School Enrollment in Pakistan (2001 & 2002)

	Rural (%)			**Urban (%)**		
Province	Boys	Girls	Gap	Boys	Girls	Gap
Balochistan	73.7	31.7	42.0	85.5	47.9	37.6
Sindh	77.4	35.2	42.2	91.1	75.4	15.7
NWFP	89.4	39.0	50.4	91.0	63.3	27.7
Punjab	83.1	51.5	31.6	90.8	87.9	2.9

Overall, girls' school enrollment dropped dramatically (outpacing boys) throughout the primary years from the 1980s to the present, and the gender gap was also exacerbated for secondary school enrollment (Latif, 2009).

Education policy in the 1980s advocated development of mosque schools for boys. The government envisioned opening 5,000 mosque schools for boys, 5,000 more schools for

girls, as well as 1,000 workshop villages where vocational training such as carpentry, masonry, and agriculture would be promoted (Bengali, 1999).

Education accounts for only a small percentage of Pakistan's GDP. In the 1970s government officials sought to improve primary school enrollment, and increased federal expenditures for education to 2.8% of the gross national product by the early 1980s (Bray, 1983). By 1988, however, education accounted for only 2.4% of the country's GDP. Federal funding increased to only 2.9% in the 2007-2008 school year (Development of Education, 1989). UNESCO reported that, as of 2014, in Pakistan, "…tax revenue is just 10% of GDP and education receives only around 10% of government expenditure. If the government increased its tax revenue to 14% of GDP by 2015 and allocated one-fifth of this to education, it could raise sufficient funds to get all of Pakistan's children and adolescents into school" (Increasing Tax Revenues, 2014). Government research and aid agencies have identified inadequate financing as a major obstacle to education development in Pakistan (Bray, 1983).

In the 1980s, the government introduced a new tax under the 1985-1986 federal budget, called the *Iqra tax*. This tax consisted of a 5% charge on imports to help finance education and literacy projects. Unfortunately, the funds generated through this program were often diverted to other expenditures. The *Iqra* project was unsuccessful. (Bengali, 1999).

2.4 Education Policy in the 1990s

The policy of the 1990s acknowledged some of the shortcomings of the Pakistani education system. In 1993, the eighth 'five-year plan' was launched. It stated:

The National Educational Policies and five-year Plans of Pakistan have emphasized universalization of primary education at the earliest possible, improving the relevance of curricula, reforming the examination system...and enhancing the quality of education in general. Despite substantial growth in the number of educational institutions, the desired goals could only be partially achieved...A large number of educational institutions were started without proper infrastructure. The condition of the existing educational infrastructure has deteriorated and is dilapidated in the absence of proper maintenance. About 35,000 primary schools are without any shelter...A large number of schools lack essential facilities such as latrines, potable water, teaching aids etc. The standard of our education is far from satisfactory. The curricula lacks relevance. Methodologies of instruction and testing are outmoded. There are gender and rural-urban imbalances both in availability and quality of educational facilities. The dropout and failure rates, particularly at the terminal levels, continue to be quite high (Pakistan, 1994).

The late-1990s marked a shift to the development of education programs by non-governmental organizations which were supported through incentive grants (Bengali, 1999). In 1996, additional short-term, in-service, teacher training programs were conducted (Parveen, 2011). In the early 1990s education policy was also aimed at constructing educational facilities for children over a larger geographical area to increase accessibility. The plan also called for separate schools for boys and girls (Bengali, 1999).

Government-sponsored reports also acknowledged a decline in the quality of public education, and the deterioration of the overall education system (Pakistan, 1992). Governmental assessment noted that public school curricula was outdated, and based on

an antiquated British model of teacher-centered learning. Policy statements of the 1990s noted that the textbooks failed to promote self-learning (a problem where students are trained to be the passive recipients of knowledge).

The 1990s were beset by challenges in federal funding for education, and showed a lack of commitment to improving education (Pakistan, 2001). The government acknowledged—based on the failure of earlier plans that emphasized non-formal education—there was no substitute for formal education (Pakistan, 1992).

From 2000 to 2010, some disparities in education were reduced and retention rates improved. The number of schools and teachers in Pakistan increased. However, the population of Pakistan doubled. This population growth outpaced any gains. Policies fail because they were hastily proposed, and without significant research to support their implementation (Khalid & Khan, 2006). Educational policy at the federal level in Pakistan rarely manifests in tangible outcomes (Lodhi & Faizi, 2009). A continually increasing defense budget has also negatively impacted education. Pakistan is often controlled by civil and military bureaucracies which are often wary of teachers and students (Khalid & Khan, 2006).

3. Poverty, Gender, Social Status, & Education

In the 1970s through 1980s, poverty began to decline in Pakistan, but this trend reversed in the 1990s. Data from the *Asian Development Bank* in 2002 depicts the following trend; between 1991-1993, the poverty rate increased from 22% to 26.6%; it increased 32.2% to 35% by 1999 (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009). Nearly 40 million residents of Pakistan live below the national poverty level, and poverty among women is higher than among men. There are several factors related to education that perpetuate poverty. For example, the larger the household size in Pakistan, the higher the probability of poverty (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009). In 2009, researchers showed that a higher ratio of total years of schooling lowers the probability of poverty (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009). Increased education for female children lowers the probability of their poverty level in adulthood (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009). Participation in the labor force is low among women as compared to men, and females who work earn less than males.

Inadequate funding for education allocated through the national budget is a major problem. However, this is only one part of the problem. Political instability, corruption, mismanagement, and disregard for the value of education also problematic.

3.1 Gender Inequality & Education

Gender inequality is intertwined with lack of economic growth. Indeed, there is a growing consensus among economists that female education and empowerment are instrumental in achieving economic stability and overcoming poverty. As mothers, illiterate women are unable to educate their children of either gender, which fosters a vicious cycle of familial illiteracy. Research has substantiated that female education is paramount to stability and the economic well-being of Pakistan (Khalid & Khan, 2006).

There is a pervasive societal belief that for most of a girl's adult life she will be a housewife, which makes her education seem pointless (Khalid & Khan, 2006). In the 1990s, the government acknowledged the underrepresentation of females in education.

However, they have not sufficiently addressed the issue. While significant gender disparities in educational opportunity exist throughout Pakistan, this disparity is exaggerated between rural and urban areas (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009). For example, in 2004, the primary school completion rate for girls in rural areas was three times lower than that for boys (Latif, 2009). Urban females have more access to education than their rural counterparts; primary school enrollment was only about 49% in rural areas (Gender Equality in Basic Education in Pakistan, 2010).

The trends in gender disparities compound low enrollment. The table below displays Pakistan's primary school net enrollment rates by gender between 2000 and 2008.

Table 4: Primary School Net Enrollment Rates by Gender (2000-2008)*

Calendar Year	Males (%)	Females (%)
2000/2001	67.5	45.8
2004/2005	73.3	55.7
2005/2006	56	48
2006/2007	60	51
2007/2008	59	52
2008/2009	61	54

*Source: Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Surveys 2001-2008.

Gender is an organizing principle in Pakistan society (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009). Males occupy the public sphere, while women occupy the private sphere. Furthermore, the social structure and dowry system encourage parents to save for their daughter's marriage rather than spending money on her education (Latif, 2009). Women are trained to be 'good' wives and mothers. Girls are often married off when they hit puberty (Latif, 2009). Girls are often denied the right to play or walk alone, unescorted, after reaching adolescence.

Poverty contributes to gender inequality in education, and gender inequality in educational opportunity causes poverty (Klasen, 2002). The government has set an ambitious goal of eliminating gender disparity in education by the year 2015. However, research indicates that, over the last 20 years, despite the many policies formulated, Pakistan has made insufficient progress in decreasing the gender gap in education (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009). In fact, today the gender gap is increasing in all the social sectors of Pakistan (Malik, 2013).

Gender-biased in curricula is a major problem, and was examined in 2004 by UNESCO (Mirza, 2004). This analysis revealed how prevalent stereotypes about the respective roles of boys and girls in Pakistan society are reinforced in primary and secondary education.

3.2 Public Schools, Private Schools, and 'Ghost Schools'

Privately run institutions (those run by foreign missionaries and NGOs) are generally regarded as much better than those run by the government. Government school teachers who often come from a lower social strata are comparatively rather ill-equipped to impart quality education, compared with private school teachers (Nazir, 2010). Besides inadequate infrastructure and facilities, competition among the various forms of schooling compounds the problem.

Another factor undermining public education is corruption. Perhaps the most intriguing example corruption are 'ghost schools' which receive allocated funding, are included in the education budget every year, but do not exist in reality (Bokhari, 1998). The National Education Census has approximated nearly 12,737 ghost schools, and an additional 5,150 schools that refuse to participate in the census (Latif, 2009). Therefore, roughly 7.7% of schools in Pakistan are non-existent ghost schools.

Despite their non-existence, these fictitious schools remain a serious problem in the country. Primarily, ghost schools impact international aid to Pakistan by discouraging international donors and aid agencies. For example, the United States Agency for International Development allocated funds to repair 60 schools. However, several of these schools are now identified as ghost schools (Perlez, 2007). In 1998, the Pakistani government ordered military personnel to search for the existence of 56,000 primary schools in Punjab to document ghost schools (Bokhari, 1998). In this same year, Farhan Bokhari (journalist with the Christian Science Monitor) noted that ghost schools reflect the domination of the feudal elites to retain a servile illiterate population (Bokhari, 1998).

A 2013 report yet again recommended that ghost schools be identified and shut down. Notably, a number of these schools were receiving funding and salary allocations for specific individuals (Latif, 2009). Fortunately, the courts in Pakistan have recently acknowledged the existence of both ghost schools and widespread absenteeism of teachers (National Higher Education Strategic Plan, 2009).

The elite in Pakistan have access to private schools, and can often send their children abroad for education (Khan, 1998). Most private schools are oriented toward preparing students for exams and are profit-driven enterprises (Nazir, 2010). Private schools in Pakistan are often controlled by an individual, who has absolute control over the entire school—including the teachers (Nazir, 2010). Private schools often lack explicit policy plans. Teachers report that their primary job is to ensure high exam results.

4. The Influence of Religion on Education

Religion is one of the most significant issues impacting education in Pakistan. Islamic education has been compulsory for Muslim students since the 1950s. The nation enjoyed a period of relative secularism. The nation's constituent assembly in 1947 of Mohammed Ali Jinnah stated, "...you belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State" (Leirvik, 2008). Meanwhile, Article 22(1) of the Constitution of Pakistan, states, "No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own" (Nayyar & Ahmed, 2005). However, since the 1970s there is increasing religious fundamentalism. Education anchored in the majority religion of Islam remained deeply embedded in the ethos of the Bhutto, Zia-ul-Haq, Sharif, and Musharraf governments from 1971-2008. The National Education Policy of 1998-2010 had the stated objective of making Islamic studies the code of life incorporated in all education (Hussain, Salim, & Naveed, 2011). Today non-Muslims face widespread discrimination.

Clifford Geertz (an American anthropologist) stated that the geopolitical factors of the country are influential in the type of Islam practiced (Geertz, 1968). This is the case in Pakistan, where since the 1970s, there has been a dramatic increase in the influence of conservative Islam on the education system (Talbani, 1996). The extent to which schools are now permeated by a nationalist and conservative form of Islam is frightening to religious minorities and secularists, because it promotes intolerance and xenophobia.

According to Professor Aziz Talbani, the logic of past colonization is promulgated by the colonized (Talbani, 1996). Since the 1970s, religion has permeated the entire education system, and there has been an ever-increasing focus on religion with less tolerance for pluralism and secularism. Indeed, most contemporary educational documents in Pakistan focus on the Islamic training of youth.

Under the military regime of Zia-ul-Haq (from 1977-1988), the educational sector was reorganized under his interpretation of Islamic doctrine termed the "Ideology of Pakistan." In 1979, General Zia's education policy stated that:

The highest priority would be given to the revision of the curricula with a view to reorganizing the entire content around Islamic thought and giving education an ideological orientation so that Islamic ideology permeates the thinking of the younger generation, and helps them with the necessary conviction and ability to refashion society according to Islamic tenets (Hussain, 2011).

Islamization was further enacted by the Sharia Act of 1991, under which a committee established 'Islamization' of education.

In 2005, a delegation from the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion held a conference in Pakistan (Leirvik, 2008). Naeem Shakir (a lawyer and human rights activist in Pakistan) was invited by the World Council of Religions to take part in the Oslo Coalition's conference on religion. Shakir submitted a paper entitled, Education for Building a Pluralistic Society in Pakistan (Shakir, 2005). In this paper, he emphasized the political framework of education in Pakistan (Leirvik, 2008). According to his analysis:

During the military rule of General Zia, thousands of political activists, scholars, intellectuals of undisputed integrity, teachers of universities and colleges were victimized and thrown out. These progressive forces were replaced by reactionaries who were handed over the educational syllabi to be prepared on the lines of religious fanaticism with a medieval mindset. The educational institutions became centers of generating baneful sentiment of religious prejudices and obscurantism. The society was militarized and socio-religious tolerance completely disappeared amongst the people (Shakir, 2005).

Since the rule of General Zia, government schools have been equally criticized for the utilization of textbooks that foster religious indoctrination, solely religious definitions of citizenship, exclusion of religious minorities from Pakistan, negative perceptions of India (and bias against Hindus), and oppressive views of the role of women (Leirvik, 2008). The permeation of Islamic ideology in the country is both socio-political and an educational issue.

4.1 The Madrassa System

Madrassas grew as an educational system that aided children who had no recourse to obtaining shelter and food. These schools traditionally served as a safety net for

impoverished youth in that they typically provide room –and free meals, along with religious education (Nayyar & Ahmed, 2005). The system, however, has grown and mutated over time. The attacks on September 11, 2001 on the United States sparked a number of critical reports on Islamic madrassas and their curriculum (Leirvik, 2008). In response, the government of Pakistan has promised to introduce regulations to control their curricula. In 2002, President Musharraf pledged to reform the madrassa system. This included closing some madrassas that were associated with being militaristic, and developing model madrassas under the supervision of the Pakistan Madrasa Education Board. However, these attempts have been met with resistance from the network of madrassas who oppose government control of religion.

Research into the effects of madrassa schooling indicates that students from the madrassa system are less tolerant of different religions and are more xenophobic (Leirvik, 2008). There is a higher approval of violent confrontation among madrassa students as compared to other students (Leirvik, 2008). They are very sensitive about their religious sentiments and easily incited. Students from the madrassas are less likely to support equal rights for women (Leirvik, 2008). Only 17% of madrassa students supported the idea of equal rights for women, as opposed to 75% for students from Urdu language schools and 91% for English medium schools (Leirvik, 2008). Correspondingly, less than 4% of teachers within the madrassas support equal rights for women, versus 61% of teachers within Urdu language schools (Hussain et al., 2011).

Table 5: Comparison of Views on Equal Rights for Minorities of Students at Madrassas, Urdu Language, and English-Medium Schools

In Favor of Equal Rights for….	**Madrassas**		**Urdu-Medium**		**English-Medium**	
	Teacher	**Student**	**Teacher**	**Student**	**Teacher**	**Student**
Ahmadis	4%	13%	27%	47%	43%	65.5%
Hindus	15%	17%	37%	47%	61.5%	78.5%
Christians	18.5%	18%	52%	66%	81.5%	84%

Historically, the madrassa was an ancient system of learning in the Muslim world. Today, there are madrassas that offer modern subjects (e.g., English, Pakistan studies, general science, and computer science) (Leirvik, 2008). The madrassa system has often been entwined in sectarian conflict and competition between different Muslim groups. As Naeem Shakir expressed, "mullahs spread orthodoxy and obscurantism and sectarian violence through the madrassa" (Leirvik, 2008).

The Pakistani Ministry of Education reported in 2003 that there were around 10,000 to 15,000 madrassas (Leirvik, 2008). As of 2005, madrassas were believed to be educating between 500,000 to 1.5 million students, or 1% of the entire student population (although there are reports that the percentage is closer to 5-10% of all students). The U.S. Institute of Peace in 2005 reported approximately 1.5 million students in 12,000 to 15,000 madrassas in Pakistan, and an additional 1.5 million students in 25,000 mosque schools,

16 million in 150,000 government schools, and six million in 35,000 private schools (Leirvik, 2008). Part of the confusion over the number of students in the madrassa system stems from agencies counting mosque schools under the category of madrassa schools (Leirvik, 2008).

Madrassas are perceived internationally as promoting militancy and terrorism. This is due to their intolerance toward those who do not share their religious beliefs. In 2001, the U.S. Brookings Institute reported that roughly 10 to 15% of madrassa schools are affiliated with extremist religious and political groups (Leirvik, 2008).

4.2 Text Books and the 'Ideology of Pakistan'

Political indoctrination regarding the inability for India and Pakistan to process a mutually beneficial relationship is rampant in textbooks .Political indoctrination by government prescribed textbooks has been documented by numerous researchers (Nazir, 2010).

In 1959, the government developed textbooks that enabled it to gain control over the curriculum (Latif, 2009). After the successful 1977 coup by General Zia-ul-Haq, he held a national education conference "to redefine the aims of education, choose basic strategies, ascertain the main problems in education confronting the nation, and bring education in line with Pakistani faith and ideology" (Nayyar & Ahmed, 2005). As one analysis of government policy notes:

There is no consensus on the term Ideology of Pakistan. It was neither defined nor contained in any constitution of Pakistan, until General Zia-ul-Haq included the term in an order of his military government that was made part of the 1973 constitution, through an illegal and questionable process. Even then, Zia-ul-Haq failed to define the term, leaving it to the ideologues to suit it to their politics. It is now often equated with Islamic ideology, with the assertion that Pakistan came into being to enforce Islamic principles of civil life as enshrined in the Shariah (Nayyar & Ahmed, 2005).

In the pre-ideology period (before the 1970s), the government-approved textbooks of Pakistan did not specifically incite hatred of Hindus. Presently, however, textbooks promote the idea that Hindus are an enemy of Islam, do not respect women, and foster social evil (Nayyar & Ahmed, 2005). These textbooks proclaim that, "All of us should receive military training and be prepared to fight the enemy" (Nayyar & Ahmed, 2005). One textbook state:

There were a large number of Hindus in East Pakistan. They had never really accepted Pakistan. A large number of them were teachers in schools and colleges. They continued creating a negative impression among the students. No importance was attached to explaining the ideology of Pakistan to the younger generation. The Hindus sent a substantial part of their earnings to Bharat, thus adversely affecting the economy of the province. Some political leaders encouraged provincialism for the selfish purpose of gaining power (Nayyar & Ahmed, 2005).

The majority of textbooks in Pakistan embrace prejudice towards women (as well as minority religious groups, individuals with disabilities, and Western nations). For example, in social studies curricula conservative gender roles are associated with "Islamic values" where girls are depicted in subservient domestic roles (Mirza, 2004).

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) issued a report in 2003-2004 on the state of curricula and textbooks in Pakistan (Nayyar & Ahmed, 2005). This report found "inaccuracies of fact and omissions that serve to substantially distort the nature and significance of actual events in our history" (Nayyar & Ahmed, 2005). The report found insensitivity to the religious diversity of the nation, incitement to militancy and violence, perspectives that encouraged prejudice, bigotry and discrimination towards fellow citizens, and the glorification of war.

The most recent National Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum released in 2002 requires the following objective: "To nurture in children a sense of Islamic identity and pride in being Pakistani" (Nayyar & Ahmed, 2005). Urdu curriculum requires teachers to convince students that they are the members of a Muslim nation. Pakistani textbooks promote the idea that Hindus caused the East-West breakup of the nation of Pakistan, terrorized Muslims throughout the region, remain a threat to both Muslims and Pakistan, and have committed atrocities against Muslims (Nayyar & Ahmed, 2005). In 2007, the Pakistani government announced an intention to change the school curriculum so that "textbooks used across the country will be free from biases against non-Muslim groups" (Leirvik, 2008). However, there is little evidence that this change has actually occurred.

4.3 Education as Indoctrination

A liberal democratic focus was, prior to the 1970s, associated with Mohamed Ali Jinnah, and a secular vision for Pakistan was derived from his 1947 speech to the nation's constituent assembly. However, Clifford Geertz noted the effort made in many Islamic-majority countries to make Islam "a universal... and essentially unchangeable and usually well integrated system of rituals and beliefs … not nearly as a religion but a complete and comprehensive way of life" (Geertz, 1968). This is the case for Pakistan in recent years, and today Pakistani schools do not promote concepts such as human rights. On the other hand, teachers utilize the basic tenants of Islam to explain acceptable codes of conduct. Thus, religious education and civics education in Pakistan have become inherently linked. Rather than creating democratic citizens, the focus has been on developing practicing Muslims. On a positive note, governmental policies oppose religious indoctrination and intolerance in curricula and textbooks (Leirvik, 2008).

5. Conclusion

Schools in Pakistan do not promote social change. Likewise, notions of participatory democracy are largely absent. Even in the debates over universal education, there is no talk of democracy or reducing social inequality (Bray, 1983). In short, Pakistan has failed to incorporate democratic values into education (Nazir, 2010). Teachers in Pakistan report that education in Pakistan is characterized by authoritarian and hierarchical relationships (Nazir, 2010). Furthermore, local school administrations in Pakistan do not promote community involvement in education. For example, surveys of head teachers report their view that community members would interfere in education in a manner that would adversely affect practice (Nazir, 2010).This is consistent with studies that indicate teachers' views that parent involvement would be negative (Nazir, 2010). In addition to teachers lacking influence over the structure of schools, student associations are usually absent from schools in Pakistan.

The government's approach to education policy promotes a belief among teachers that power lies with the bureaucracy. A major challenge is the lack of transparency within the structure of schooling (Nazir, 2010). Nepotism and favoritism are also problematic in the school system, and lead to a perception among teachers that political appointments are responsible for the hiring of incompetent teachers (Nazir, 2010). There is a general perception in Pakistan of significant corruption within the education system. There is a belief among teachers that the state bureaucracy siphons money from educational accounts (Khan, 1998) Despite the repetition of lofty rhetoric of government policy, education in Pakistan remains neglected. Policy-makers are apathetic in facing the relationship between education and social mobility (Khan, 1998).

5.1 Limitations of the Study and Future Recommendations

This study is limited to an analysis of policy documents, statistics collected by government offices and NGOs, and a limited amount of secondary source material developed over the previous 30 years. In addition, the research presented here are is extremely broad dealing primarily with education policy goals at the national level, and nationwide statistics. This research does not fully capture the state of the Pakistani education at the regional level, or the day-to-day reality within schools. Additional research is needed to more fully understand the link between policy initiatives espoused at the national level, and the impact on the education system at the local level. Additional qualitative research, including interviews among policymakers and stakeholders within the public education system are needed to better assess the connection between espoused goals in the day-to-day reality.

5.2 Implications for Education Policy

Initiatives sponsored by the *World Bank* and the *United States Agency for International Development* (*USAID*) in Pakistan have pursued a 'bottom-up' strategy focused on change at the local level. However, these well-meaning reformers routinely find themselves confronted and mired by local demands. Universal education in Pakistan is necessary for the alleviation of poverty, religious extremism, and political instability. In addition, an understanding of the history of Pakistani's education system is necessary to implement a realistic plan of action that will increase the population's access to education.

In 1948, the *Central Advisory Board of Education* was created "To provide a forum for the discussion of problems of common interest" (Peshkin, 1963). No common interest in Pakistan has remained more elusive than universal public education. The struggle for universal education must be cast as a social necessity central to the common interest of the Pakistani people. Peshkin posed the question of whether Pakistan's schools could develop curricular changes that would precede (rather than follow) economic, political, and ideological changes in the society (Peshkin, 1963). He desired an ideological change consistent with a democratic vision for educational change that would precede economic and political changes as well as drafting educational policy. This democratic vision must cast education as a social good in the interest of the common welfare, promoting secularism and gender equality.

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